

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Virtual Meeting
October 13, 2020

Called to Order at 6:00 p.m. with, Gloria Cronin Fisher, Brian De Vriese and Hilma Sumner, Town Coordinator, in attendance. Robyn Provost-Carlson was absent.

Other Attendees: See attendance sheet.

Review Agenda: Because of Robyn's absence, several topics will be tabled until the next meeting.

Public Comment:

Jean Gran asked that the Board reconsider holding the public forum. She said she thinks it will drive a wedge in the community, the town faces a financial crisis and there needs to be an impartial moderator.

Bob Gruen said that the Fire Chief's report listed similar problems in both the Community Hall and at 18 Jacobs Road and asked why the former school building could be opened and the Community Hall could not.

Sue Lively commented that the Board needed to complete the charge to each of the various buildings committees before appointments were made. She also stated that she hoped that it was determined what qualities were desired in members of each committee and that those were the people who were appointed.

Margaret Freeman stated that she understood the public forum to be a time when the Board was to listen to public comment and not be a discussion.

Bill Gran asked if the Board would provide regular updates of the Green Communities Grant work.

6:15 p.m. Pole Hearing: *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to convene the pole hearing.*

Lark Thwing of Hawley and Brian Foucher of WiValley explained that in order to serve residents of northeast Hawley they are asking Heath's permission to install a pole on Schoolhouse Road to serve 18 Hawley homes with broadband service. The pole would be installed in the town's right-of-way. The four-town network would own the 60-foot pole. They stated that they could provide documentation that they would be responsible for removing the pole if it was not needed in the future. Because there were questions of liability that could not be answered, it was decided to contact Town Counsel and to continue the hearing. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to continue the pole hearing to October 20th at 6:15 p.m.*

Minimum Required Contribution Feedback: Ken Rocke joined the meeting to explain the possible changes that DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) were considering. The changes would be to make changes to the Chapter 70 formula by eliminating or changing the hold-harmless clause. Ken explained that, if this change were to occur, it could mean a significant difference in the amount of money that Heath would receive. Ken said he would show interested people where to find information and will review letters that are drafted. He also said there are three ways through which the Town could respond to DESE's proposal: 1) Make a public comment to DESE (comment period closes Oct. 15). 2) Write comments to MBAE. 3) Write to state legislators.

Ken shared a spread sheet showing each county town and gave information according to DESE's wealth factor. It also showed how much more funds Heath would need to contribute if the hold harmless clause was eliminated. The state will not give less money than the last year usually because of declining enrollment. If the clause is removed, Heath would be responsible for an additional \$204,983.00.

Ken commented that writing points would be to note that Heath is the poorest town of the MTRSD and one of the poorest in Franklin County. If Heath had to make up the difference, it would be devastating to the financial scenario. In his work Ken is working on direct, accurate numbers and will let the town know how to access the information.

Review Minutes: *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of September 29, 2020 with amendments.*

Public Forum on October 17th: Since Robyn was absent, the Board expressed concern about not being able to fully prepare for the event. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to cancel the Oct. 17th Public Forum.*

Charges and Appointments for Buildings Committees: The Board decided to table these matters until next week's meeting.

Triwire: A request had been made to allow Triwire to rent a room at 18 Jacobs Road. They would use the room for storage, to hold their maps and daily morning meetings. Discussion held whether to use the rental income for Triwire police details or for 18 Jacobs Rd. maintenance and utilities. *On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to rent a room in the building for \$500 per month.* Tim will be instructed of the need for extra keys.

The MLPAC wrote an email to the Board with questions about the use of police detail with the Triwire construction. It was decided that Robyn, Hilma, Art Schwenger and the Police Chief would meet to develop a clear procedure for using police detail.

Fire Chief Report: The Board reviewed the report sent by Fire Chief Anzuoni listing conditions in each of the town buildings that need to be addressed to bring each building into compliance with fire safety regulations. Brian said he had questions about some of the items and would like he, Hilma and the Fire Chief to meet to discuss some of the items to obtain clarification about what is needed.

Town Coordinator's Report:

- CARES Act: Attended remote seminar about submitting application for second part of funding which will cover July 1—Dec. 30, 2020.
- MTRSD & Cares Act: Correspondence followed by phone conversation with Melissa Dunnet, Business Manager. Although MTRSD has received COVID-19-related funding to help support the additional expenses of remote learning and returning to in-person learning, expenses greatly outweigh the grant monies that were received. Because of that, the school district is reaching out to the member towns asking if they would be willing to submit to the municipal CARES Act funding for some of the additional educational expenses. For example, additional Chromebooks had to be purchased. Although Melissa did not have a definite number of students who needed them, it could be as many as 52 Chromebooks which were purchased at \$189 each (\$9,828) for Heath students.

There are also the HVAC repairs in both the high school and Hawlemont buildings which Heath students attend. Costs for the high school repairs are estimated at \$6,250 and for Hawlemont about \$80,000. Is Heath willing to include a funding request to help with any of these expenses? Both Brian and Gloria agreed that Heath could use some of its CARES funds to pay for Chromebooks for Heath students.

- FEMA Application: Working on submission of FEMA application for COVID-related expenses reimbursement. Attended online training session of completing an application. Had phone conference with Tim Lively, EMD, and Makayla Velarde, MEMA project coordinator, today. Makayla went over the application process; what level of detail needs to be included in the application and an outline of what expenses will qualify for FEMA reimbursement.
- Community Compact Cabinet (CCC) grant application: Worked with Heath's assigned NE IT technicians to compile information needed to submit grant application. Application for \$45K submitted today for work and equipment to include a centralized data storage and backup, and network upgrades to support the new system.
- Town email addresses: Working with NE IT and Crocker to gain access to several email addresses that have been dormant and probably should be eliminated. New treasurer needs to use the treasurer email but Hilma has not been able to access it.
- Board of Health Ex-Officio Member: The Board of Health has requested that the Select Board reappoint Gene Garland as an ex-officio member for the remainder of this fiscal year. ***On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to appoint Gene Garland as an exofficio member of the Board of Health for the remainder of this fiscal year.***

Mail:

- D. Mason re: business plans for buildings
- D. Mason re: Public Forum format
- R. Viarengo re: Public Forum: do not hold
- W. Gran re: town finances & TFTF
- J. Gran re: town finances
- R. Dane re: town finances
- M. Muenkel re: using 18 Jacobs Road
- M. Freeman re: request for clarity of budgeting & ATM votes. Gloria pointed out that the email response was in error. At the ATM Brian amended the amount budget for Heath School maintenance and utilities from \$15,000 to \$500 and the amendment passed.
- P. McGahan re: more hours for Tim
- B. Kovacs re: thank you for flu clinic volunteers
- S. Litchfield re: BB sign up campaign starts
- MTRS re: operating budget
- M. Rabinsky re: Green Communities grant annual report due
- H. Hallman re: voting & COVID
- J. McDonough re: property & equipment maintenance under grant
- DEP re: monitoring well at 319 Avery Brook Rd
- National Grid re: helicopter inspections
- Colonial Power Group re: Quarter 2 Status Report

- P. Porter re: TriWire room rental—Hilma and Pam Porter will draft a rental agreement.
- S. Litchfield re: TriWire room rental
- BDV, K. Roche re: Minimum Contribution
- N. Wolf, S. Litchfield re: MLPAC concerns over police detail
- S. Lively re: restructuring of town buildings committees
- T. Lively re: update of work in response to fire inspection report
- W. Gran re: CH/GC projects
- D. Freeman re: endorsement for Bob McGahan
- Tom Lively re: endorsement for Bob McGahan
- J. Gleason re: well water concerns
- C. Long re: building permit denial
- S. Stanton re: letter to DESE
- S. Stanton re: letter to parents
- Hawlemont News
- FRCOG re: MVP & HMP contract
- Pole Hearing documents

On a motion by Gloria Cronin Fisher and a second by Brian De Vriese, the Select Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hilma A. Sumner
Town Coordinator